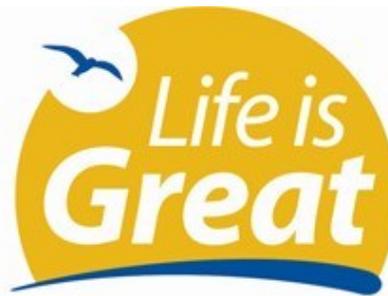


Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report



Reporting Date:

November 25, 2013

Pennsylvania's Great Lakes Region
crawford • erie • mercer • venango

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The NW PA Fishing Report provides timely angling information for Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango Counties – covering all species and all waters open to the public. The fishing comments and photos are offered by regional tackle shops and area anglers, compiled and published twice a month. The NW PA Fishing Report is based on experiences, observations and opinions of individual contributors; information sources are considered reliable but comments are not independently verified. If you would like to share your fishing experiences or photos from any waterway in the four counties, please email to Darl Black at darlblack@windstream.net. In providing information or pictures, you are agreeing to your comments being edited, and posted to websites and distributed electronically.

The Landing Net

by Darl Black

ICE and Fire



Ice: The Manchester Hole on Trout Run this morning following the weekend winter storm. The creek is freezing up and wind chill is in the low teens, but steelheaders are still standing in icy water trying to hook up one more fish.



Fire: An unsteady hand-held grab shot

of first sun rays breaking the horizon through the trees as I was hooking up the boat for one more trip.

Northwest PA Fishing Report: November 25, 2013

Brought to you by PA Great Lake Region tourism

What's biting in the counties of Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango?

News Briefs



Mandated Winter Wear...

Meadville, PA – The PFBC reminds boaters that November 1st marked the first day of mandatory life jacket wearing on boats less than 16 feet in length. This requirement to wear personal flotation device (PFD) runs during the cold water months, from November 1 through April 30th.

Alien DNA found in Ohio River...

Harrisburg, PA – Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) and the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) have confirmed that environmental DNA (eDNA) from the invasive Asian silver carp has been found in two water samples collected from the Ohio River. Researchers use eDNA analysis as a tool for early detection of Asian carp, which include silver and bighead carp. Test results provide evidence these non-native species could be in the upper Ohio River in Pennsylvania. Asian carp are a significant threat to aquatic ecosystems, devouring microscopic algae and animals that other species rely on for food, effectively decimating other species. For more information, go to www.fishandboat.com.

Economic Boost...

Meadville, PA – Area business leaders, travel and tourism experts and outdoor media met on November 15th to exchange information regarding the importance of hunting for the local economies. The meeting was spearheaded by Hunting Works for Pennsylvania. To learn more, go to www.huntingworksforpa.com.

FRENCH CREEK flowing through all four counties

Dan Shay (Meadville) filed 11/24: Dustin Shay's father Dan says November and December are normally excellent months on French Creek for BIG walleye with live bait, plus a very good opportunity for a trophy musky. However so far this month walleye catches have been sporadic with mostly small fish. In past years, some of the biggest walleyes seem to bite just as the Creek starts producing slush ice. Given the 7 day forecast, slush is likely this week.

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave Richter (Richter's Tackle) filed 11/24: "Given the windy conditions this past week, no one has been fishing in boats. The water temperature is 39.7 degrees. A handful of guys are fishing from shore, including the docks at Jamestown Marina where they are catching panfish and the Linesville Spillway where they are getting big perch on Vib-E blades. Some guys are fishing Vib-E Blades off the causeway bridges at night for walleye, too."

Conneaut Lake

Rich Weber (Erie Sport Stores) filed 11/18: Rich sent in a photo of a 46" musky caught by Dave Lehman from Conneaut Lake last week. This is the only large Conneaut Lake musky that has come to the attention of the NW PA Fishing Report this fall.

Chad Templin photo



ERIE COUNTY

Presque Isle Bay

Mike (B.A.C. Bait) filed 11/24: "Fishing activity right now is low. Customers have been catching perch off the North and South Piers – at least until the snow storm blew in last night. Crappies were biting in the Stink Hole. We had a 15-pound brown trout brought in last week; the angler caught it at the Waterworks Dock."

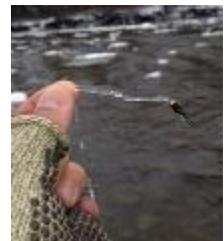


Paul Stewart Photos

Paul Stewart (Butler) filed 11/11: "On Saturday the 9th, my buddy Mike and I fished Presque Isle Bay. I tried the North Pier – too windy. We checked the East pier – waves too rough. Moved inland and found a less windy spot and hit the perch hard! Most were small, but managed 30 keepers."

Erie Tributary Creeks

Ric Gauriloff (Trout Run Tackle) filed 11/24: "Snow has arrived in Erie. The steams are in great condition. The snow did not bring them up. We've had great fishing this past week in all the Erie tribs. A fresh run of fish came in this past week and steelheads were being caught from the lake all the way upstream to south of I-90. More browns are now showing up on the West side. We gave two citations for browns in the past two days, plus several other 5 and 6 pound browns were brought in. There are some jacks mixed in with the freshies, but plenty of larger fish, too. Little beadheads, Sucker Spawn and Crystal Meth flies working well. If you like fishing tandem rigs, try a single egg on top and little beadhead below. The P-Flash fly and large orange veiled eggs are working well for us this week too. Egg sacs and skein, plus shiners, are all catching fish. The hottest bait right now for us is chartreuse egg sac. Cold this week but good fishing should continue."



Frozen leader

Gary Heuble, Jr. (Poor Richards) filed 11/24: "Creeks had been a perfect green color prior to this storm, but are now slushing up from last night's snow. With cold temps predicted, expect some icing to occur overnight. If we get some above freezing temps this week, the ice will likely melt. Steelheads are up and down the streams."

Becky (Elk Creek Sports) filed 11/24: "Due to the ice and slush on Elk Creek, Dan was suggesting to customers to try the *Mile* streams on the East side of Erie. Word is Crooked Creek to our west is open, too. But here on Elk a persistent snow band has been blowing right off the lake all night and day. A warm up during the week will put anglers back on Elk."

Ed Phillips (New Castle) filed 11/22: "My wife and I went to the Tomato Patch on 20 Mile Creek this past Wednesday afternoon, and as you might expect, the creek was extremely low – lower than it was three weeks ago. More importantly, most of the fish were gone as well. By my estimate, I would say at least ¾ of the steelhead have either moved upstream or have been harvested. I did find a small school of active fish in a run by a big rock. I managed to hook 4 and landed 2. The following day we went a little farther downstream and I found another small school and hooked 3, landing 2. I am a pretty diehard nymph fisherman, and these fish came on #16 nymphs with a brown or black hair body with a rainbow beaded head. I also had success with a red wire body with a white tail."

Dennis Beggs (Franklin) filed 11/11: "Here is my steelhead report from 20 Mile Creek on 11/8. During the afternoon, I caught three and lost five on a pink egg fly. My older brother Bill lost eight using minnows. We had a great two hours of action in the late afternoon."

Thomas Watral' Erie Diary

- 11/6: The lake tributaries on the east side have plenty of fish in them. Water levels are dropping but still had good color. Best bets have been emerald shiners and single egg patterns. I fished 20 Mile and 16 Mile, doing very well over two days.
- 11/7: The Creeks are up, have some color and are running faster than normal. Steelheads are on the move with fresh ones coming in. I fished 4 Mile today and a number of hook-ups with minnow and bobber, landing six fish – released them all. I was using a 10-foot crappie rod with inexpensive reel – but it did the job.
- 11/19: I went down to the Border Patrol Dock today and slammed big perch. I limited out by 1 pm. Most of the perch were 13 to 14 inches long. I was using a Zebco 7-foot rod with Shimano spinning reel with 4-pound Gamma Line – a combo which allowed me to cast out a long distance.
- 11/20: It was a very nice day to be on the lake. Started at the docks, landing 30 perch on minnows. Then I played around for crappies at a different area and we landed 30 nice crappies at Border Patrol Dock. Also hooked into several steelheads, landing 2 of the 4 hooked. Every fish hit a minnow, except the steelhead took grubs on a black Mini Foo Jig.
- 11/22: The Bay has been on fire, and hopefully will continue until ice-up. Lots of anglers braving the cold rain and snow, to catch perch and crappies. I've seen a number of limits of both species coming from piers and marina docks; best bets are minnows. Steelhead are hitting in the streams with egg and sucker spawn fly patterns producing. The bigger fish seem to hit in the worst weather – dress for the wind and cold then go fish.



Steelhead Action! / DB photo

MERCER COUNTY



Stacked shad/DB

Lake Wilhelm

Darl Black (Cochran) filed 11/8: "Marilyn and I headed to Wilhelm looking for largemouth bass. For many years, the first two weeks in November has yielded our biggest Wilhelm bass – exception being 2011, 2012...and now 2013. Not a single hit from a bass. We caught several paper thin crappies from the center of the creek channel while trying to figure out the massive 'blocks' of fish observed on the Garmin sonar. In a discussion the next day with PF&BC Area Fisheries Manager Tim Wilson, I was told these were most like massive schools of gizzard shad. A bass only needs to open its mouth and inhale to fill its belly."

Shenango River Lake

Ken Smith (Sharon) filed 11/24: "I fished Shenango a couple days last week and had pretty good success. On 11/20, I fished the deeper drops with wood in 16 feet of water. Crappies were hitting on almost any jig I used. I caught 60 fish of various sizes in 5 hours, keeping 20 of the nicer ones. The next trip was on 11/22. The wind was down and the bite was up. Crappies were even more aggressive than last time. I caught fish all day, even when it started raining and the fog rolled across the lake. All the bigger fish were whites but the blacks were short and fat with thick fillets. I kept a limit to finish my open water season. Crappies are still in the deeper brush. I had a great season and now looking forward to ice fishing season."



Ken Smith: Shenango Crappie Guru

VENANGO COUNTY

Justus Lake



New ramp/Marilyn Black photo

Editor's Note: The long-awaited 2nd boat ramp is now operational at Justus Lake. Located near the swim beach, the new concrete ramp will provide boat fishermen easier access to the lower portion of the lake. The 144-acre lake is electric motor only, making it a slow journey by boat from the current boat ramp at the very north end to the dam area – especially when the wind kicks up. Justus Lake supports a mix of species including largemouth & smallmouth bass, musky, panfish, a few walleyes as well as brown and rainbow trout.

Allegheny River

Scott Kinard (Butler) filed 11/22: "I had another great day on the river with Ken Pate on Wednesday, 11/20. Although the water level had risen 1.5 feet from my weekend trip and the clarity had turned to an unfortunate stained light mud color, we still managed to catch 25 or so smallmouth bass in a few hours. I would not say the bite was great, but it was darn good for the cold, muddy conditions this late in the fall. All the smallmouths came on Venom Tubes which I fished on my Denali 7' medium power rod with 20-pound fluorocarbon line. The last few weeks have been productive for me on the northern Allegheny. I've been having 30-plus smallmouth bass days, although only a few went over 4 pounds. But a solid 3 to 3.5 average for November isn't bad. I also caught several nice walleye. With the cooler temps coming this week, I expect river temp to dip down below 40 degrees and go downhill from there. Maybe the only action left will be live bait for walleyes. It's been a great year; I hate to see it come to an end."



Scott Kinard/ DB

Lou Letterle (Franklin) filed 11/22: "I have not fished much this November, but I did make it out on Thursday, 11/14 with friend Ken Dudash of Pittsburgh. Water temperature in the morning was about 38 degrees and we caught only one fish – a chunky smallmouth that felt like dead weight on my rod. By mid-afternoon, the sun warmed the water to about 40 degrees and we ended up boating a dozen fish, including six walleyes. The largest walleye was about 22 inches; taken on a large creek chub. Some walleye were caught on a white/silver pattern hair jig. This has not been the best fall fishing season I've had, but it was good way to end the season."

Steve Udick (Oil City) filed 11/19: "The temperature was moderating and the wind was on the blow. I headed to the river early Saturday morning. My first cast produced a plump 21" walleye on a Rapala SR7 Shad Rap. The bite went on for a couple hours. I caught fish on minnows and the Shad Rap as the bass were in a feeding frenzy. Bass were scattered all along the back waters in 2 to feet of water. Sunday was a different kind of day...more wind for one thing. I didn't catch a fish until I got to the deepest hole, then it was one after another. Both walleye and bass were stacked inside the current line and out of the wind. Again, I landed fish on the Shad Rap, worked very slowly. Live minnows did not last a minute in the water before being picked up. I ended the weekend with 30 smallmouth up to 19 inches and 6 walleyes from 18 to 21 inches. I was using VMC #4 Circle Hooks on 10-pound Berkley Fireline with a leader...not 100% hook-up on each hit, but close. However the best thrill was seeing my first pair of River Otters!"



Steve Udick photo

8



Get Bit Crawling Tube/DB

Marilyn Black (Cochranon) field 11/19: "Darl and I had a wonderful day on the river on the 19th. We launched around 10 am, caught a number of bass in the first pool, ran down to another pool but could not get bit there, so we ran back up and finished the afternoon strong – including two doubles and three smallies on three casts for me. The total time actually fishing was about three hours after deducting photography time. We landed 30 smallmouth bass with the largest hitting 20-inch mark. All our fish came on Get Bit Baits Smallmouth Tubes. The larger fish seemed to like the special Crawling Tube. We sprayed the tails with garlic-scented Spike It dye and dosed the entire tube with Yum F-2 Shrimp scent. We used identical rods – G Loomis GLX 2-power spinning rods with 6-pound Gamma Edge line. Even if we don't get out again, it was a perfect day to end the season."

Chris Wolfgang (Oil City) filed 11/11: "Dale and I fought the wind and cold from 9 am to 1 pm on Veteran's Day. I caught 3 bass, two at 17.5 inches and one at 16 inches. Dale caught one bass and a walleye. All-in-all not a bad day considering the weather. All fish were caught on tubes with ¼-oz heads – heavy weight for me."

Bill Logan (Pleasantville) filed 11/11: "Windy day on the river. I caught 9 bass in four hours (with only one hit in the first hour). The one pictured weighed 3 lb. 6 oz. and took a spinnerbait off the bank."



Chris Wolfgang/ CW photo



Dale Black/ CW photo



Bill Logan/ Logan photo

Gene Winger (Oil City) filed 11/25 – “Allegheny Diary”

- 10/21: On Friday, Scott Lux and I fished the Oil City pool landing 22 smallies using Winco Predator Craws and C.W. Smallie Delight jigs. We found the smaller smallmouth scattered throughout the pool, while larger fish were stacked in pockets. This was Scott’s first fishing trip on the Allegheny River and I’m sure not his last...we had a great day! Sunday morning Chris Wehr and I fished for two hours boating 20 smallies – all good sized fish.
- 10/28: September 3 was a beautiful fall day so Peg and I took ½ day off from work and fished the river, landing 18 smallies with the largest going 19.5 inches, 4 pounds – all in deep water on Winco Predator Craws and C.W. Smallie Delight jigs. On Thursday, George Sisul and I fished Oil City pool, landing 25 smallies and 2 walleyes. To our surprise most of the larger smallies came from shallow water using Winco Solid Body River Darters and Winco Swim Bait.”
- 11/14: With Archery venison in the freezer I’m excited to be back on the river for the fall bite! With water temps hovering around 40 degrees, I was expecting sluggish smallies so I grabbed the smallest bait I had, a Winco Willie Wanabee Jig on a 3/16-oz. head. Good call. By working the bottom as slow as possible I landed five smallies within the first hour. All were over 18 inches and the largest was 21.5 inches weighing in at 4.75 pounds. By the end of the day I had landed 15 smallies with ten over 17 inches. It was a great Cold Water day on the Allegheny with some of the biggest fish of the season!
- 11/16: It was a beautiful day so my son-in-law Chris Wehr and I hit the river. I guess everyone else had the same fever because the Oil City pool was loaded with boats. I counted 20 boats. By the end of the day we managed to boat 20 smallies with 19 inches the biggest. Most came on Winco Willie Wanabee and Chillie Willie Jigs.
- 11/21: How fast things change! I fished the entire day only landing 4 averaged sized smallies. Tried every jig in the box and some different spots – no good.
- 11/22: With a major storm predicted for the weekend and temps dropping, I was anticipating a good day on the river. The bite started great, landing 6 smallies within the first hour – all on Winco Willie Wanabee Jigs. Then the bite bass bite slowed and I started picking up walleyes on the same jigs. By end of a very rainy and cold day I managed to land 10 smallmouth and 6 nice walleyes. Time for a new jig order!”
- Gene Winger photographs:



Darl Black photo



21-1/2 inch SMB



The Livewell

Brought to you by:

Allegheny River action continues through the late fall.

Don't miss out on walleye!



Lou Letterle/Letterle photo



Boat of the Month: Wiegel Marine has one new Extreme Shallow and a lightly used Rogue still available for this winter season on the river!



Marilyn Black/DB photo

Scott Kinard's Fall Album on the Allegheny River:



Livewell Overflow: Steelhead of the Lake Erie Tributaries

Denny Beggs on 20 Mile Creek— Beggs photos



Ed Phillips on 20 Mile

/Phillips Photos



Angler on Walnut Creek

/DB photo



DB photo

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GAMMA

MOLECULARLY ALTERED LINES



Gamma Fishing Tip



Dale Black (President of Black Knight Industries) and all the staff at Gamma Fishing Lines wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, and safe fishing trips.

Winner of the spool of Gamma Line for this issue of Fishing Report: Dennis Beggs

Winner of the Prize Pack of Baits for this issue of the Fishing Report: Dave Lehman

Lures for the Fishing Report Prize Pack supplied by: Case; Gene Larew; Get Bit Baits; Road Runner; Venom Baits; Yum; Zipper Worms.

Follow Darl as he fishes with angling experts around the country at

www.darblack.blogspot.com

Obtain the PGLR fishing brochure "Reel It In!" at www.pagreatlakes.com